

## **I. Background**

**T**he State Planning Office is responsible for advising the Governor and Legislature on state waste management policy (5 MRSA § 3305 sub-N). It does this in three ways:

- 1) Developing the State Waste Management and Recycling Plan; the policy document that guides how Maine's waste is managed and how to address future waste management needs;
- 2) Analyzing changes in statewide solid waste generation, recycling rates, and available disposal capacity in the biennial Waste Generation and Disposal Capacity Report; and
- 3) Ongoing advice and counsel through testimony, study reports, and policy recommendations.

State law requires the office, at five-year intervals, to consult with those involved in solid waste management to determine whether current state policies are appropriate from their perspectives. In response to that directive, the office convened a 32-member solid waste policy review task force in the fall of 2005.

### **Focus of the Task Force**

Given their diverse interests, finding consensus among solid waste stakeholders can be difficult; in fact, was not possible in the last task force. For the 2005 task force, the office invited diversity and asked members to help us understand their views. This task force was not asked to find consensus on issues. It was not asked to analyze data and make recommendations. It was not asked to agree on policy changes. Rather it was asked, "How do current policies affect you? How have they worked? How have they not worked? What might work better?" Our goal was to use the knowledge, expertise, and opinions of the task force members to understand how Maine's current solid waste system impacts different sectors.

To determine the topics for task force discussion, the office hired a facilitator to interview 30 solid waste stakeholders prior to convening the task force. Those interviewed raised nine policy issues of import to them:

1. Solid waste management hierarchy
2. Disposal capacity
3. Roles of state, municipal, and commercial sectors
4. Local and host communities
5. Construction and demolition debris
6. Material disposal bans
7. Recycling
8. Regional approaches to waste management
9. Public recycling education

The State Planning Office organized task force deliberations around these nine issues.

## **Consultation**

During the course of the review, the State Planning Office consulted the Legislature's Natural Resources Committee. Before the first task force meeting, the office briefed the committee on the task force structure and process and afterwards informed them of the results of the first meeting (See Appendix F). The office updated the full committee on a number of occasions during the Second Regular Session. The office also consulted the Department of Environmental Protection.

## **Public Participation**

In addition to broad representation within the task force membership, the State Planning Office sought public input. The public was invited to submit comments in writing through the mail or e-mail via the office's web site. Lastly, at each task force meeting, we provided an opportunity for the public who wished to speak.

## **Use of the Task Force's Work**

The State Planning Office used the task force deliberations to make a number of recommendations in this report. Their discussion will also serve to inform our work as we embark on the update of the State Waste Management and Recycling Plan this year (38 MRSA §2122).

## **Elements of this Report**

This report provides the office's recommendations for planning for Maine's solid waste management system. The recommendations are grouped into four categories: 1) recommendations that affirm existing state policies; 2) policy recommendations, which would require a statutory change; 3) research and data collection recommendations which would lead to studies and reports to assist policy deliberations; and 4) programmatic recommendations, which can be undertaken by the office within existing statutory authority. Section II of the report includes a policy analysis of each recommendation. Lastly, the appendices contain the task force membership, process, policy questions, and meeting notes.